

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CANBER 01352 030928Z

17

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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R 030843Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5172

INFO AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

USMISSION USUN

USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 1352

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, VN, AS

SUBJECT: PROPOSED "PRG" OBSERVER STATUS AT 7TH WMO CONGRESS

REF: A) STATE 010509; B) STATE 45727 (NOTAL); C) STATE 35260
(NOTAL)

SUMMARY GOA HAS DECIDED TO SUPPORT PARTICIPATION OF
PRG "AS OBSERVER BUT NOT AS A COUNTRY" IN 7TH WMO
CONGRESS. EMBASSY HAS EXPRESSED STRONG OBJECTIONS
AS USUAL BUT DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT WHITLAM IS
SUSCEPTIBLE TO US REPRESENTATIONS ON THIS SUBJECT.
END SUMMARY.

1. EMBASSY LEFT AIDE MEMOIRE WITH AUSTRALIAN DFA
JAN 17 MAKING ALL THE POINTS IN REF A.

2. MARCH 3 DFA (MILLER, ACTING ASST SECRETARY, SOUTH
ASIA BRANCH) CALLED IN EMBOFF TO INFORM HIM THAT
GOA HAD DECIDED TO VOTE FOR OBSERVER STATUS FOR
"PRG" AT 7TH WMO CONGRESS. MILLER SAID
THAT GOA HOPES THAT ITS DECISION WILL BE READ AS
FAVORING PRG PARTICIPATION NOT RPT NOT AS GOVERNMENT
AND ONLY IN MEETINGS WITH HUMANITARIAN ANGLE. HE
ADDED THIS POSITION IS NO DIFFERENT FROM GOA VOTE
FOR PRG PARTICIPATION AT ICRC WEAPONS EXPERTS
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CONFERENCE IN GENEVA IN 1974. IF GOA IS CALLED ON

TO EXPLAIN ITS VOTE AT WMO CONGRESS, IT WILL MAKE STATEMENT ALONG FOLLOWING LINES: QTE AUSTRALIA RECOGNIZES ONLY ONE GOVERNMENT IN THE TERRITORY OF SOUTH VIETNAM, NAMELY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM. ACCORDINGLY, AUSTRALIA DOES NOT RPT NOT SUPPORT THE PRG'S BEING INVITED TO THE SEVENTH CONGRESS AS A COUNTRY. NEVERTHELESS, AUSTRALIA SEES VALUE IN THE PRG'S PARTICIPATING AND THEREFORE SUPPORTS THE PRG'S BEING INVITED AS AN OBSERVER. END QTE

3. GOA DECISION WAS CONVEYED TO US AT WORKING LEVEL, BUT THROUGH UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES THERE ARE AT THE MOMENT NO OFFICIALS DEALING WITH THIS TOPIC BETWEEN PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM AND INDO-CHINA DESK OFFICERS. EXPLANATORY STATEMENT QUOTED ABOVE WAS ALMOST CERTAINLY DRAFTED BY WHITLAM HIMSELF AND IS NEARLY VERBATIM REPEAT OF COMMENTS HE MADE ON PRG ISSUE AT LABOR PARTY CONFERENCE IN EARLY FEBRUARY.

4. DRAWING ON POINTS MADE IN REF B, EMBOFF SAID THAT U.S. WILL BE DEEPLY DISAPPOINTED IN AUSTRALIAN DECISION. HE NOTED AUSTRALIA HAS CONSIDERABLE IMPACT ON OTHER POWERS IN ITS VOTE ON PRG ISSUE, AS REACTION OF MANY COUNTRIES INDICATED AT RECENT GENEVA CONFERENCE ON LAW OF WAR. ATTEMPT BY GOA TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN NORMAL INVITATIONS AND INVITING PRG TO PARTICIPATE "NOT RPT NOT AS REPRESENTATIVE OF COUNTRY" WILL SURELY BE LOST ON MANY GOVERNMENTS AND NET RESULT WILL BE FURTHER BOOST TO STATUS OF PRG.

5. WHITLAM HAS MADE UP HIS MIND ON THIS ISSUE AND ON INDOCHINA GENERALLY, AND DFA (PARTICULARLY IN ITS PRESENT DENUDED CONDITION) IS UNABLE TO AFFECT HIS DECISION. DAILY PRESS ACCOUNTS OF UNWILLINGNESS OF PROMINENT MEMBERS OF U.S. CONGRESS TO CONTINUE AID ENCOURAGES WHITLAM TO BELIEVE THAT WHAT HE IS DOING IS HELPING U.S. TO FACE UNPALATABLE DECISION TO HALT ALL SUPPORT FOR GVN. ULTIMATE STEP FOR WHITLAM WILL BE TO RECOGNIZE PRG. HE MADE THIS POINT ABUNDANTLY CLEAR AT TERRIGAL: THE FIRST STEP IN CONTACT WITH INSURGENT REGIME IS CONFIDENTIAL

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INFORMAL CONTACTS, FOLLOWED BY CONTACTS AT INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS, FOLLOWED BY FORMAL RECOGNITION. THE TIMING OF THE VARIOUS STEPS MAY VARY BUT THE OBJECTIVES ARE UNLIKELY TO CHANGE, AS WE READ WHITLAM'S EXPRESSED INTENTIONS.

6. WITH FONMIN WILLESEE, PERMSEC RENOUF, ET AL UNAVAILABLE, ONLY REPRESENTATIONS MADE IN DEPARTMENT TO AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR HAVE ANY PROSPECT OF EVEN REACHING PM. ANOTHER ROBUST STATEMENT

OF CONCERN, SUCH AS VOICED BY ASST SECRETARY HABIB (REF C) MIGHT HAVE SOME SLIGHT EFFECT, BUT WE ARE DEALING WITH A MIND MADE UP. CHARGE TOOK ADVANTAGE OF MEETING ON ANOTHER SUBJECT MARCH 3 WITH DFA ACTING DEP SEC FEAKES TO EXPRESS STRONG DISSATISFACTION AT THIS RENEWED GOA SUPPORT OF PRG. FEAKES REPLIED THAT HE HAD HEARD PM REPEAT HIS ADAMANT POSITION ON INDOCHINA TWICE IN PAST THREE DAYS.

7. GOA AND WHITLAM PERSONALLY ARE FULLY AWARE OF DEGREE OF U.S. CONCERN ON THIS TOPIC BUT WILL NOT BE MOVED BY OUR FREQUENT HIGH LEVEL REPRESENTATIONS UNLESS THEY FEEL SUBSTANTIVE COST TO CONTINUED EVOLUTION OF AUSTRALIAN POLICY.
HARROP

NOTE BY OC/T: EXDIS CAPTION ADDED PER MR. HOGANSON, S/S-O, 3/3/75.

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